

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

How Japan promotes inbound cultural tourism has become a crucial step. As implementations of Japan's new strategy in the tourism sector will affect how Japan is seen internationally, a question of 'what Japan strategized towards the international tourism market' is raised. Past research has found that Japan had done nation branding efforts through public diplomacy which apparently lacked full utilization of all actors aside from government and culture as a tool. On the other hand, it has been stated in this research that Japan has made a brand new strategy of cultural tourism campaign, namely the *Visit Japan Campaign*. The campaign has increased inbound tourism and brand Japan as a nation in the international field, as well as developing power in economy and culture.

Globalization along with the technological and infrastructural development has made an impressive growth on the world's economy and in most countries, the tourism sector has emerged to give impacts towards countries' identity, politics, and economics. It is very important in international relations to have each country's own distinct differentiator, and one of what plays a 'big deal' is culture. Japan, as a country of many culture, is not an exception. Japan after the rise as an economic power has come to realize the potential of their tourism sector to be pushed in the international agenda. After the global economic crisis on 2009, Japan has realized tourism sector as a driving force to revive their economic state as well as re-branding their image in international scale. Having the advantage of distinct culture,

Japan has come to a decision of promoting inbound cultural tourism to the international tourism market.

Japan carried out a detailed strategy that involves many parties and a lot of planning, all to make sure the best output of campaign and best outcome of international feedbacks. Japanese government as the leading and coordinating act, mainly and particularly under Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Japan with their tourism bodies *Japan National Tourism Organization* and *Japan Tourism Agency* expands their reach into overseas offices and private business sectors, including media.

Apart from that, Japanese government through their foreign policies as stated by Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan also stimulates activity of Japanese local citizens to cooperate with welcoming inbound tourism and participate in international tourism exchanges. The main strategy to do so is dividing their campaign design into four main parts which include domestic efforts such as introducing attractive and internationally competitive destinations, strengthening human resources, improving and preserving environment, as well as foreign-targeted efforts like advertisement of tourism programs.

As of 2010 to 2015, *Visit Japan* has been the driving program of tourism sector which acts as a campaign to reach Japan's vision in the international field. To project an effective campaign that brand Japan as a tourism nation, Japan has thought what are needed to firmly brand and establish their distinctive culture through tourism. Japan knew exactly their target of wanting Japan or *Nippon* to be known worldwide as the place good to visit, good to live in, and it is expressed in

their codes of expressions such as their *Visit Japan* logo and campaign tagline “Japan. Endless Discovery.”

The campaign did not only stop in mere promotions, but also surely through various diplomatic initiatives where Japan facilitates and simplifies relations with general public from overseas by reaching a lot of agreements with various countries. Furthermore, Japan makes sure of culture as what makes Japan distinct that helps constructing the tourism nation brand, making culture itself a dynamic, forceful and influential soft power. Japan in unison works under a certain framework of policy from the government, but also a historical ethic called *Omotenashi* which resulted totality in serving and provision of tourism offers. Lastly, Japan also made sure of how their *Visit Japan* campaign would appeal to international tourism market by aligning their goals and strategies as listed in the UNWTO’s focus of sustainable tourism.

Further efforts include pushing the agenda of cultural awareness that helps brand and appeal to international tourism market. Japan is undeniably known for their traditional culture with a total of nineteen World Heritage Sites at Japan in 2015. Japan has also been recognized in their excelling popular culture, named *Cool Japan* by experts. Their cultural awareness efforts did not only get reached through self-PR efforts, but also through aid initiatives that supports other countries’ cultural awareness, in exchange of promotion for Japan.

Finally, the unified effort was able to value their nation branding strategies effective as by 2015, Japan has been covered on countless mass media and social medias as tourism country and a country of endless charm appeals. This unified

effort is possible to give such outcome as unified actors behind the strategy involves all range and levels of communities, from local, national, regional, and international or transnational individuals, civil societies, education and research institutions, private business sectors and associations, as well as Japanese government themselves with the cooperation of foreign countries' government.

This unified effort resulted in a progressive number of foreign tourists' arrivals in comparison with past years, yet the effort may still be maximized in the case of more direct and active involvement of media, especially social media. Through this research, a very comprehensive information regarding Japan and his tourism strategies can be seen, yet the role of media is not yet distinct. Media throughout 2010-2015 *Visit Japan* campaign has been participating mostly indirectly through their interest of coverages for Japan who is rising as sensation. In the other hand, there are still more opportunities that may be given in the future where media may be involved directly in international promotion of inbound cultural tourism in Japan. Some efforts such as invitation of media to tourism expo and international conferences were witnessed and it is indeed a good start, yet can be seen as moderate effort. Remembering that Japan excels in technology after the globalization era, it should be appropriate for Japan to maximize their tourism sector through the significant role of media.

Nevertheless, *Visit Japan* is an effective strategy of Japan's tourism sector to appeal towards the international tourism market. As mentioned previously, opportunities of more direct involvement by media with the help from Japanese government may maximize projection of Japan's endless discovery of cultural

tourism for international audience. Apart from that, this research has pointed out how Japan has showed an incredible growth as a country, economically and as a developed and big power. After the crisis Japan faced on 2009 and along the way, tourism sector through *Visit Japan* campaign efforts have helped Japan rise and known worldwide, being one of the countries leading the international tourism industry, and also emphasizing significance of transnational societies through international arrivals and departures.

This research has examined cultural tourism campaign of Japan during the first five years after Japan's rise from the global crisis. Therefore, further expansion of Japan's *Visit Japan* campaign regarding both media contributions and/or other expansions are surely available to examine, let alone considering the dynamics of international relations every year. This research has also mainly focused on the main tourism body of Japan's government, whereas tourism itself is a very complex sector which may involve other ministries and/or agencies besides MLIT and MoFA, as well as other possible non-governmental actors that are yet covered during the 2010-2015 *Visit Japan* campaign. Through this finding, this research also proposed further research regarding Japan's efforts towards the international tourism market nowadays with all the opportunities Japan have, especially remembering that Japan has been elected to host the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 and other achievements.

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